

# American Citizen Services News

*Informing the American community in Syria*

## FIRST EVER TOWN HALL IN DAMASCUS IN HONOR OF OVERSEAS AMERICANS WEEK



Consul General Andre' Goodfriend  
Damascus Townhall

In honor of Overseas Americans Week, the U.S. Embassy hosted its first-ever Town Hall with the private American citizen community in Damascus on 21 April, 2010. An estimated 75 American citizens attended and the outreach effort to the community was well-received.



Damascus has the largest number of American citizens in Syria, followed by the northern city of Aleppo, and the coastal cities of Latakia and Tartous. Complementary to the Consular Section's other outreach efforts, including its website, monthly newsletter and warden system, the Damascus American Citizen Town Hall served as a forum to strengthen the sense that the American community in Syria is a partnership between private citizens and the Embassy. It was also an opportunity to discuss the many changes occurring at the Embassy and within the Consular Section, and to increase the dialogue with the American community in order to better understand their issues of greatest concern.

The main topics of interest to Damascene Americans were largely centered on the arrival of the new U.S. Ambassador to Syria, the re-opening of the Damascus Community School, followed by questions about economic sanctions, taxes, absentee voting, and requests for assistance with social security benefits. Members of the American citizen community were also able to provide their own insights with regards to family issues such as home schooling or preparing children for the U.S. college environment.

For those of you who were not able to attend, American Citizen Services (ACS) will make video clips of the Town Hall available as Webcasts on the Embassy website. Following on the success of the Damascus Town Hall, the ACS unit has scheduled two additional Town Halls to be held in Aleppo and the coastal city of Latakia, the first week of June. In addition to the Town Halls, ACS will offer off-site passport processing at both locations in order to ease the burdens on families with small children needing to process CRBAs or passport renewals.

### Inside this issue:

Townhalls and ACS in Aleppo and Latakia 2-3

Damascus Community School news 4

Additional Product Recalls 5

Passport Renewal by Mail 6

FSOT Test Information 7

May is Older Americans Month 8

Web Portals for Older Americans 9

Contact information 9

## **Townhall and American Citizen Services in Aleppo on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 and in Latakia on June 2-3rd, 2010**

Consular officers will be available for American citizens at the ICARDA International School in Aleppo on **June 1<sup>st</sup>** (Tuesday) between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in order to provide limited American Citizen Services followed by a Townhall meeting open to the entire American citizen community scheduled from 2:00-4:00 pm.

On **June 2nd**, another **Townhall** is scheduled from 2:00 to 4:00pm at the Afamia Rotana Hotel, in the Ugarit Hall Conference Room in Latakia. Following the townhall, on **June 3<sup>rd</sup>**, **from 9:00am to 12:00pm** in the Ugarit Hall Conference Room at the Afamia Rotana Hotel, Consular Officers will be offering a limited number of American Citizen Services before returning back to Damascus.

The Townhall meeting is an informal public meeting that gives the members of a community an opportunity to get together to discuss emerging issues and to voice concerns. It's an opportunity for us to discuss the services that the embassy offers Americans and to hear from you about how we can work together as a community. Both the Aleppo and Latakia Townhalls are open to the entire American citizen community.

The following American Citizen Services will be offered in Aleppo and Latakia:

### Passport Services

- \* Collection of US Passport applications- renewals for children or first time applicants
- \* Registration of newborn children. (We strongly recommend that you contact the Consular Section in advance of your visit to ensure you have the proper documents at hand.)
- \* Collection of US Passport applications for insertion of additional pages

### Notarial Services

- \* Document notarizations

### Miscellaneous

- \* Limited Petition Filing for US citizens living permanently in Syria. (We strongly recommend that you contact the Consular Section in advance of your visit to ensure you have the proper documents at hand.)
  - \* Any other issues or concern of interest to the American community in Aleppo, Hama, Latakia, Jableh, Hassake and Qamishly.
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**Note:** The Consular Officers will not be able to discuss individual nonimmigrant or immigrant visa cases. The Consular Officers cannot accept nonimmigrant or immigrant visa applications. For questions concerning individual nonimmigrant and immigrant visa cases, the public is invited to contact the consular section at [nivdamascus@state.gov](mailto:nivdamascus@state.gov) and [ivdamascus@state.gov](mailto:ivdamascus@state.gov)

Information on required documents, photographs requirements, and fees can be found on the U.S. Embassy website at <http://damascus.usembassy.gov> or by contacting the consular section by telephone or via [acsdamascus@state.gov](mailto:acsdamascus@state.gov)

**Most services** require you to bring **original documents plus photocopies of all documents you present**, including, but not limited to, your passport and other identity documents; the passports, marriage and divorce certificates of parents seeking services for their children; and birth certificates. There is no photocopier immediately available in the room where the Consular Officers will be conducting business.

Passport applications for minors under the age of 16 require the presence of the minor and their parents along with documents to establish identity, proof of citizenship and proof of relationship. Both parents must appear together and sign the application before a consular officer; or one parent may appear in person to sign and submit the other parent's statement notarized in the United States or at a U.S. Embassy abroad; or one parent may appear, sign, and submit primary evidence of sole legal authority. Minors age 16 and 17 may apply in person with their own identification, but for security reasons, parental consent may be required. If your child does not have identification of his/her own, a parent will be required to accompany the child and present identification.

**Please bring exact change for services required. Check the Embassy website for further details**

	NOTARIAL SERVICES	DOLLARS	SYRIAN POUNDS
41	NOTARIAL (AFFIDAVIT OF SUPPORT, ETC.)	30.00/20.00	1410/940
43	CERTIFIED COPY	30.00/20.00	1410/940
47	AUTHENTICATION	30.00	1410
51	LETTERS ROGATORY	735.00	34545

CODES	PASSPORT SERVICES	DOLLARS	SYRIAN POUNDS
01	PASSPORT APPLICATION (DS-11)	25.00	1175
02	PASSPORT ISSUANCE (ADULT)	55.00	2585
02	PASSPORT ISSUANCE (ADULT DSP-82)	55.00	2585
03	PASSPORT ISSUANCE (MINOR)	40.00	1880
08	REPORT OF BIRTH ABROAD	65.00	3055
09	PASSPORT SURCHARGE	20.00	940



## DAMASCUS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### **Damascus Community School to Reopen**

In April, 2010, the DCS Board of Directors voted to reopen the Damascus Community School for 2010-2011 school year, grades PreK-8, and appointed Dr. James Leibzeit to return to the Damascus Community School as its Director. Registration started on Sunday May 2, 2010 and will continue until classes as full.

High School grades (9-12) also seem to be a strong possibility for inclusion in the 2010-11 school year, but this decision has not yet been taken. Parents of interested HS students are encouraged to contact Mrs. Diana Yazigi, Business Manager without delay to express their interest.

**As per the May 12 meeting** between the Ministry of Education and the US Embassy, and in accordance with the Damascus Community School's August 31, 2008 license, and the regulations mentioned in the Legislative Decree 55 of September 2008 and its September 2009 amendments, the Damascus Community School is permitted to enroll: foreign students, Syrian students with dual nationality (Syrian and other nationality), dependents of Syrian Diplomats, and other Syrian students that fall within the regulations of Decree 55.

All Syrian students and Syrian students holding another nationality (dual nationals) are required to obtain an approval from the Ministry of Education as part of the registration process.

All Syrian Students and Syrian students with dual nationality that were enrolled at Damascus Community School prior to its closure and desire to enroll at the school for the 2010-2011 school year who have not yet done so are permitted to return and register, and are encouraged to contact Mrs. Diana Yazigi, Business Manager as soon as possible.

For more details or information, please contact Mrs. Diana Yazigi, DCS Business Manager, at 3310331, 3337737, Sunday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## **Warning– Another Voluntary Recall for certain lots of Children’s and Infants Tylenol and Motrin products (McNeil products)**

Fort Washington, PA (April 30, 2010) – McNeil Consumer Healthcare, Division of McNEIL-PPC, Inc., in consultation with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is voluntarily recalling all lots that have not yet expired of certain over-the-counter (OTC) Children’s and Infants’ liquid products manufactured in the United States and distributed in the United States, Canada, Dominican Republic, Dubai (UAE), Fiji, Guam, Guatemala, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago, and Kuwait.

McNeil Consumer Healthcare is initiating this voluntary recall because some of these products may not meet required quality standards. This recall is not being undertaken on the basis of adverse medical events. However, as a precautionary measure, parents and caregivers should not administer these products to their children. Some of the products included in the recall may contain a higher concentration of active ingredient than is specified; others may contain inactive ingredients that may not meet internal testing requirements; and others may contain tiny particles. While the potential for serious medical events is remote, the company advises consumers who have purchased these recalled products to discontinue use.

The company is conducting a comprehensive quality assessment across its manufacturing operations and has identified corrective actions that will be implemented before new manufacturing is initiated at the plant where the recalled products were made.

Consumers can contact the company at 1-888-222-6036 and also at [www.mcneilproductrecall.com](http://www.mcneilproductrecall.com). Parents and caregivers who are not sure about alternative pediatric health treatment options should talk to their doctor or pharmacist and are reminded to never give drug products to infants and children that are not intended for those age groups as this could result in serious harm.

For additional information, including affected NDC numbers, consumers should visit our website [www.mcneilproductrecall.com](http://www.mcneilproductrecall.com) or call 1-888-222-6036 (Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern Time, and Saturday-Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time). Any adverse reactions may also be reported to the FDA’s MedWatch Program by fax at 1-800-FDA-0178, by mail at MedWatch, FDA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852-9787, or on the MedWatch website at [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch).







### Passport Renewal is now available by Mail

Effective May 3, 2010, Passport renewal by mail is now an available option for most adult applicants. Minors and first time passport applicants must still appear in person at the Consular Section of the Embassy in order to renew or apply for a new passport.

For those passport applicants who wish to renew their passport via mail. Please go to any DHL Express office in Syria with the following items:

- Passport renewal fee in Syrian pounds (check website for fee schedule)
- Courier fee and insurance to include the cost of the return airwaybill
- U.S. passport
- Passport Application form ([DS-82](#), check website for further details)
- [Two passport-size photographs](#)

Your passport will be renewed by mail and both old and new passports will be returned to you within 21 days.

For those unable to renew by mail and in need of an appointment at the Embassy for passport renewal- appointments can be made through the following link:

<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=DMS&appcode=1>

In cooperation with  
the Directorate of Culture  
and Dar Al-Assad for Culture and Arts in Latakia  
the Cultural Section of the U.S. Embassy  
invites you to an evening of American country music by  
**Kareem Salama**  
Monday, May 17, 2010  
8:00 p.m. at Dar Al-Assad for Culture and Arts in Latakia

**Interested in a Career with the Foreign Service?**  
**The Foreign Service Officer Test will be administered at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus**  
**on June 5, 2010**

The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Damascus would like to extend an invitation to all eligible American Citizens residing in Syria or who are otherwise interested in registering for the June 2010 Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) to be held on Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Damascus, Syria.

The Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) is administered several times each year to assess applicants interested in working for the U.S. Department of State as Foreign Service Officers (FSOs).

Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) are America's advocates, promoting peace and supporting prosperity as they advance our interests and protect American citizens throughout the world. Since our work has global impact and is carried out around the world, FSOs are located at over 265 embassies, consulates and other diplomatic missions in The Americas, Africa, Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South and Central Asia.

The Foreign Service is a career like no other; every day FSOs represent the United States to the world, promoting peace, stability and prosperity.

If you are a capable, adventurous, and dedicated candidate who is prepared to step up to the challenges that face our country, we want you to apply.

For more information about a career as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State, please check out the following website: <http://careers.state.gov/officer/index.html>

**If you are interested in taking the 2010 FSOT and would like to take the test in Damascus, the test will be offered Saturday, 5 June 2010. Please note you must complete registration by 24 May and 28 May 2010 is the deadline to schedule an overseas test seat for June in Damascus.**

To be eligible, all applicants must be:

- U.S. citizens on the date they submit their registration package

- At least 20 years old and no older than 59 years of age on the day the candidate submits the registration

- At least 21 years old and not yet 60 on the day the candidate is appointed as a Foreign Service Officer

- Available for worldwide assignments, including Washington, D.C.

To apply, please visit <http://careers.state.gov/officer/employment.html> and follow the steps outlined there. The application must be completed on-line.

If you have questions that you are not able to answer via the website listed above, please feel free to contact us at [FSOTDamascus@state.gov](mailto:FSOTDamascus@state.gov).

## May is Older Americans Month

### Are you lightening your load to prevent travel injuries?

Baby boomers have traveled more than any previous generation—not surprising in light of technological advances and economic growth during their lifetimes that make it easier to travel across the United States and even around the world. But travel is often hard on the body and may lead to injuries, particularly when you take heavy luggage on the trip.

The risk of travel-related injuries increases with age because people gradually lose bone density, flexibility, and strength. Whether you have a job that demands a lot of travel or you're using retirement to explore new places, the American Occupational Therapy Association suggests taking a few simple precautions to reduce the risk of joint and muscle damage that carrying a heavy suitcase can cause.

- Pick the right suitcase for the occasion. You don't need a lot of luggage for a short trip, so take a smaller case. If you are going on a long trip, consider taking two small cases instead of one large one.
- Avoid purchasing luggage made of heavy materials that add extra weight that you will have to lift and carry.
- Especially if you will need to carry your suitcase a long way—for example, through a large airport or train station—select a suitcase with sturdy wheels and a 360° turning radius.
- Lighten your load by packing only what you will need. Check the weather and plan your outfits in advance, considering items you can mix and match. Also plan to wear your heaviest clothing, such as boots and overcoats, on the plane.
- Take your time when loading your luggage into overhead bins. If you are struggling, ask a flight attendant for help.

**For more information on safe traveling tips, visit:**

Illness and Injury Abroad resources from CDC

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/illness-injury-abroad.aspx>

The American Occupational Therapy Association: Backpack and Ergonomic Strategies

<http://www.aota.org/Consumers/Ergonomics.aspx> 





## Web portals for Older Americans

**May is Older Americans Month**—a tradition dating back to 1963 to honor the legacies and ongoing contributions of older Americans and support them as they enter the next stage in life. The Administration on Aging, (AOA) has compiled a number of websites that may prove helpful to Older Americans as they navigate the wide variety of resources available on the world wide web:

**USA.gov** is the official U.S. gateway to all government information. [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov)

**USA.gov for Seniors** site helps users access all [government](#) sites that provide services for senior citizens. [www.usa.gov/Topics/Seniors.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Seniors.shtml)

**DisabilityInfo.gov** is a comprehensive Federal website of disability-related government resources. [www.disabilityinfo.gov](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov)

**GovBenefits.gov** site is the official government benefits website. It is a free, confidential tool that helps individuals find government benefits they may be eligible to receive. [www.GovBenefits.gov](http://www.GovBenefits.gov)



### American Citizen Services Hours and Contact Information

#### **U.S. Embassy Damascus**

American Citizen Services

Consular Section

2, Al-Mansour Street, Abu Roumaneh

PO Box 29

Damascus, Syria

Phone: 555-555-5555

Fax: 555-555-5555

For appointments, please go to our website at :

<http://damascus.usembassy.gov/service.html>

#### **UPCOMING HOLIDAY CLOSURES**

May 6, Thursday	Marytr's Day
May 30, Sunday	Memorial Day
July 4, Sunday	Independence Day
September 05, Sunday	Labor Day
September 12, Sunday	Al-Fitr Holiday

“Assisting approximately 4 million Americans who reside overseas and nearly 60 million who travel abroad remains a top priority for the U.S. Government.

Though consular work is punctuated by extraordinary acts to help U.S. citizens during times of crisis or urgent need, it is built upon a foundation of services provided to an American public that increasingly lives, works, and learns in the global community.”

-- Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan.